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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2205  
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002004

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/LOGERFO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/15/2016  
TAGS: [IS](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#)  
SUBJECT: ABU MAZEN REPORTEDLY MOVES TO RETAIN  
ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF PASF

REF: A. JERUSALEM 00799

[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 00386

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Palestinian sources in the PA President's office and the General Intelligence reported May 14 that President Abbas (Abu Mazen) has moved to retain administrative control of the PA security forces (PASF) by appointing an advisory committee composed of key security chiefs. The measure -- the legal basis of which is derived from the executive powers outlined in the 2005 Security Services Law -- will allow Abu Mazen to retain indirect administrative control over the PASF. Interior Ministry spokesmen declined comment on the measure pending an official announcement, but the HAMAS leadership will likely view the move negatively. END SUMMARY.

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Abu Mazen Implements Idea  
Favored by PASF Chiefs  
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[1](#)2. (C) According to General Intelligence officer Jamil Abu Surour, Abu Mazen has decided to implement an idea long favored by high-ranking Fatah officials and form an Officers Committee composed of Fatah loyalists (ref A). (NOTE: The Security Services Law mandates the creation of an Officers Committee, comprised of the most senior commanders of each security service and two officials appointed by the President, to provide recommendations on all administrative decisions regarding the PASF. END NOTE.)

[1](#)3. (C) According to the Security Services Law, the Officers Committee is empowered to make recommendations to Abu Mazen on the following:

- Recruitment of officers in the security forces;
- Promotions, dismissals, and retirements;
- Recommendations for decorations, military honors, and scholarships;
- Appointment of all officers above the rank of colonel; and
- Transferring officers from one unit to another.

[1](#)4. (C) President's Office administrator Issam Abu Zeir told POL FSN Specialist on May 14 that Abu Mazen has appointed the following PASF officers to the committee:

- Suleiman Hillis, Acting NSF Commander and Head of the Committee
- Tawfiq al-Tirawi, Deputy Chief of Intelligence (Mukhabarat)
- Rashid Abu Shabak, Interior Security Chief
- Mohammad Yusif, NSF Administrative Director (Presidential

Appointee)

-- Ala'a Husni, Chief of Civil Police  
-- Ziad Hab Arrih, West Bank PSO Chief  
-- Ibrahim Atiani, Civil Defense Chief  
-- Mazin Izz Addin, NSF Director for Political Guidance  
(Presidential Appointee)  
-- Nidal Assouli, West Bank NSF Commander

¶15. (C) Effectively, the committee incorporates the leadership of all the security services without including any officials from HAMAS or the Interior Ministry.

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MOI Not Included or Consulted  
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¶16. (C) HAMAS Interior Ministry spokesman Khaled Abu Hilal declined comment on the issue during a May 14 press conference, saying only that he was unaware of the decision. Issam Abu Zeir indicated to POL FSN on May 14 that President Abbas has not yet decided whether to make an official announcement about the formation of the Officers Committee.

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COMMENT  
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¶17. (C) While the creation of the Officers Committee is intended to bolster Abu Mazen's security powers, the extent of Abu Mazen's legal authority to act on recommendations from the Officers Committee remains unclear. While Abu Mazen is commander-in-chief of all the PASF, operational control of the security forces is divided between the President and the Prime Minister (ref B).

WALLES